



**For immediate release**

August 2005

**\*\*\*MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***  
**\*\*\* PHOTO OPPORTUNITY \*\*\***

## **Judicial Council to Vote to Approve New Criminal Jury Instructions**

**BACKGROUND:** The Judicial Council of California is expected to adopt “plain English” criminal jury instructions that emphasize straightforward language at their August 26 meeting. This historic move represents the culmination of a comprehensive eight-year project developing the Judicial Council of California Criminal Jury Instructions (CALCRIM), which offer an alternative to the often confusing legal terminology that has been used in criminal trials since the 1930s.

If adopted, California courts would be able to apply the new jury-friendly CALCRIM instructions in criminal trials starting January 2006.

In 1997 Chief Justice Ronald M. George launched a statewide task force to write new, clearer civil and criminal jury instructions as part of the Judicial Council’s ongoing effort to reform and enhance the California jury system. Civil instructions were approved in July 2003 and are now used widely by judges throughout the state.

The statewide Judicial Council of California Task Force on Jury Instructions is comprised of 15 judges, lawyers and other experts, all appointed by Chief Justice George.

**WHAT:** **Judicial Council to vote on new CALCRIM jury instructions.** Representative language transformations include:

**Old** “Innocent misrecollection is not uncommon.”

**New** “People sometimes honestly forget things or make mistakes about what they remember.”

**WHO:** The 21 voting members of the Judicial Council include Chief Justice George; 14 judges (one Supreme Court associate justice, three Court of Appeal justices, and 10 trial court judges); four attorney members appointed by the State Bar Board of Governors; and one member from each house of the Legislature. The council also has six advisory members.

**WHEN:** **Friday, August 26, 2006**  
**9:30 a.m.** – Approximate time the agenda item is scheduled to be introduced  
**10:15 a.m.** – Approximate time Judicial Council interviews can begin after the council votes

**WHERE:** **Administrative Office of the Courts**  
**455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco**  
**Third Floor, Judicial Council Conference Center**

**CONTACT:** To arrange advance interviews with one or more of the task force members contact Abbi Hertz at 415-543-3216. For Chief Justice George contact Lynn Holton at 415-865-7726.

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